

What are the Current Smoke Detector and Carbon Monoxide Detector Laws?

On 2/20/04 these laws changed in Rhode Island. The governing statutes are found in the Rhode Island Fire Safety code (sec. 23-28 of the R.I.G.L.) Then this refers you to the R.I. Uniform Fire Code chapter 20.11 for Residential. You are then directed to the R.I. Life Safety Code, as amended, chapter 24.3 for existing residential homes. Then the R.I.L.S.C sends you to NFPA 72 (uniform fire code, 2002 ed.) and NFPA 720 (Household CO warning Equipment 2003 ed.) for the specific requirements on installation. What this all boils down to is the following:



General Requirements

Existing houses built from 6/1976 to 2/2004 **must maintain ALL installed hardwired smoke detectors.** Houses Built from 1/2002 to 2/20/2004 **must maintain all hardwired carbon monoxide detectors.** You may NOT substitute a battery operated detector for a hardwired detector and you may not remove or delete any previously installed detector.

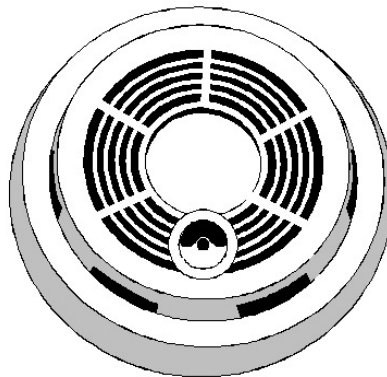
Carbon Monoxide Detectors

NFPA 720 requires carbon monoxide detectors to be installed centrally outside the sleeping areas, in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms. Should the bedroom or sleeping areas be separated and the audibility of the occupants is impaired, more than one detector may be required. Sound levels must be 85dBa at 10 feet. There must be a visible power ON light. Note: call the fire marshal if you have a question as to whether an area would qualify as a sleeping area.

Detectors installed may be battery operated, hardwired or wireless (different from battery). In houses constructed after 1/1/2002 CO detectors **MUST** be hardwired. Three family homes **MUST** have hardwired or Wireless smoke and CO detectors at title transfer **OR** by 7/1/2008.

CO detectors are no longer required on each floor unless there is a sleeping area on that floor, or they were previously required and are hardwired into the house electrical system.

Combination CO and Smoke detectors are allowed. Installation of extra detectors for better coverage is also allowed.



Smoke Detector Requirements

- 1). One smoke detector per floor, unless special circumstances apply.
- 2). Detector placed outside of sleeping area
- 3). Detector near the stairway to upper level
- 4). Detector at the base of the cellar stairs (if ceiling is joisted, then place on bottom of joist.
- 5). House built after 2/20/04 will also have detectors hardwired inside the bedrooms and have a heat detector in attached garages.

Detectors may be battery, hardwired or wireless, unless they were previously required to be hardwired, then they must stay hardwired. Three family homes **MUST** be hardwired by 7/1/2008.

Detectors may be mounted either on the ceiling or the wall. **THE FIRE DEPARTMENT STRONGLY RECOMMENDS ON THE CEILING AS SMOKE TRAVELS UP THEN OUT.** The edge of the ceiling mounted detectors must be at least 4" from the wall. The top of wall-mounted detectors must be between 4" and 12" from the ceiling. All detectors will have a power on light.

No Smoke Detector shall be mounted:

- 1). Inside a Garage
- 2). 3 feet from a cooking appliance
- 3). 3 feet from a forced air register
- 4). 3 feet from the tip of a ceiling fan
- 5). 3 feet from a shower room door
- 6). Detectors mounted within 20 of a cooking appliance **WILL BE** of photoelectric design.

Household fire alarm systems are allowed as long as they meet the above requirements and if they perform two functions (burglar & fire), the fire alarm **MUST** take precedence. Sound must be 85dBa and different from the burglar alarm.

Smoke Detectors must be replaced every 10 years!

What to do when the smoke detector sounds!

- 1). Know two escape routes from each room and make sure all family members know them also. This should be talked about at a family fire safety meeting and EDITH (exit drills in the home) planning.
- 2). If there is Smoke, CRAWL-stay low and Go! Remember to feel doors for heat BEFORE opening them.
- 3). LEAVE THE HOUSE!
- 4). Have all family members meet at the same place. This should be talked about also at a family fire safety meeting.
- 5). Call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or the neighbor's house.
- 6) DO NOT GO BACK IN TO THE HOUSE! Firefighters would rather respond to a false call, than to an emergency when someone was injured because you went back into the house to investigate or to retrieve belongings.

What to do when the CO detector sounds!

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is a gas that is odorless and tasteless. CO is caused by an incomplete combustion of a fuel (gas, oil, wood, etc.) Symptoms of CO poisoning can often be mistaken for the flu, headache, nausea, and drowsiness.

If your CO detector sounds, leave the house and call 9-1-1 from a cell phone or the neighbors house. The Fire Department has gas meters to check the air quality of the house. If CO is found we will ventilate the house and have someone contact your service company to check your fuel burning appliances. If you are having any symptoms, the fire department will transport you to the hospital for a check up. Remember, CO will affect Infants, young children and pregnant women faster and more lethally.

Procedure for a Smoke and CO Detector inspection.

- 1). Visit Narragansett Fire Station #1 at 40 Caswell St. and fill out the appropriate paperwork and then make the appointment for the inspection. There is a \$30.00 fee
- 2). Prior to the inspection, make sure all of your smoke detectors and CO Detectors are properly installed and working.
- 3). Per. Narragansett Town Ordinance chapter 10, Article 3, Section 10-51 and 10-54, All Buildings in the town will display the Street number on the building at the front door. The numbers WILL be at least 3" in height with a corresponding width and WILL be on a contrasting background (dark numbers with light background, light numbers on dark background). If the building front is not visible from the road, a marker with the building number will be at the entrance of the driveway.
- 4). The fire department will arrive and check for the house number and test all smoke and CO detectors for proper functioning.
- 5). If your smoke detectors are part of your burglar system. You will need a representative from the alarm company there for the test. The Burglar system shall be tripped first and then the Smoke detectors to make sure the fire alarm is different and takes precedence over the burglar alarm.
- 6). If detectors are hardwired, the fuse/circuit breaker should be marked in electrical panel. If detectors have battery backup, they should be checked with the power off also.
- 7). If any portion of the inspection fails you will have to make another appointment for a re-inspection and be charged another \$30.00



Narragansett Fire Department

40 Caswell St.
Narragansett, RI 02882
Tel: (401) 789-1000
Fax: (401) 782-0699

Chief James J. Cotter
Fire Marshal James P. Given



Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detector Laws in Rhode Island for Existing 1,2 and 3 Family Homes

As of Feb. 20, 2004